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Abstract

During closer inspection with a local defect area being magnified, it is desirable to reduce image acquisition time by making the number of stage moves as few as possible so that a defect can be observed efficiently. To accomplish this, the invention offers a method of observing samples characterized by: acquiring a reference sample image not including any defect on a sample by capturing an image of the sample, based on the information on the defect developed on the sample and detected by an inspection apparatus; adjusting the position of the sample so that the defect will fall within the field of view of image capture, based on the above information; acquiring a defective sample image including the defect on the sample by capturing an image of the sample in the adjusted position; locating the defect on the defective sample image by comparing the reference sample image and the defective sample image; acquiring a magnified image of the defect by capturing a magnified view of the local area where the located defect exists within the field of view of image capture; and displaying the magnified image of the defect on a screen.